



THE  
INTER-AMERICAN  
SCHOOLS SERVICE



This booklet describes the program and activities of the Inter-American Schools Service, a nonprofit, nongovernmental agency of the American Council on Education, which acts as a clearing house of assistance and professional advice for more than 200 American-sponsored schools in Latin America.

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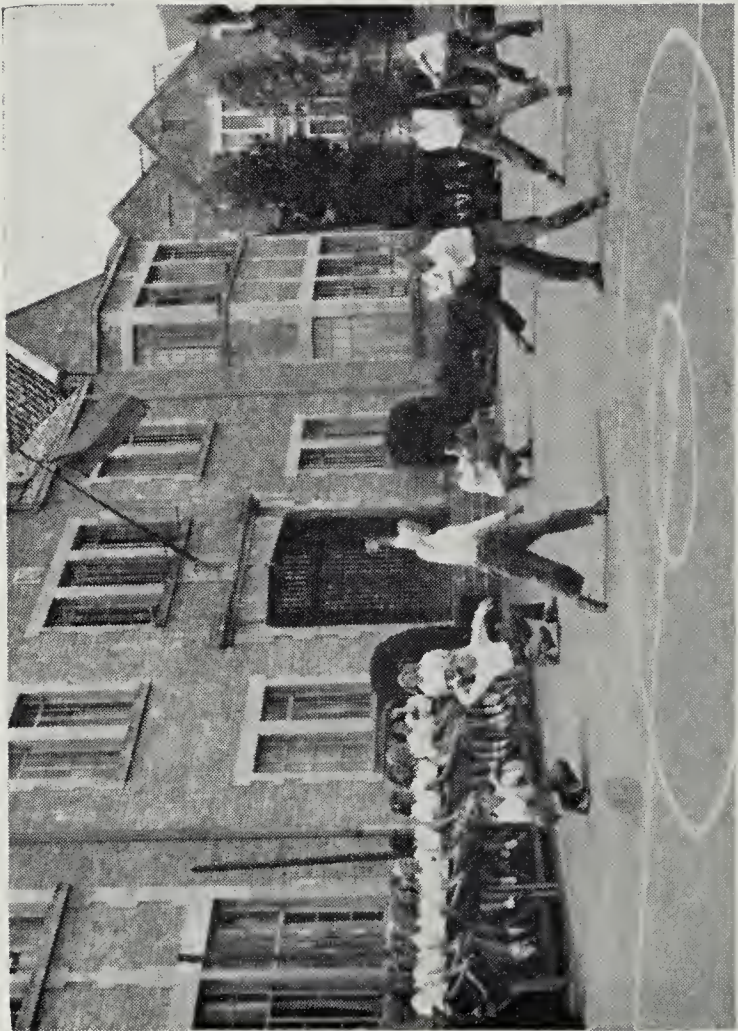
## CONTENTS

History of the Service . . . . .	3
Significance and Extent of Operations . .	5
Statement of Purpose and Basic Policies .	7
Present Activities and Services . . . .	8
Grants-in-Aid — Teaching Personnel — Latin American Students and Teachers — Professional Services — Information and Liaison—Financial Advice—Tech- nical Advice	
Administrative and Teaching Positions . .	11
Regulations Governing Grants-in-Aid . .	13
Contributions . . . . .	14
American Council on Education . . . .	15

## HISTORY OF THE SERVICE

During several decades prior to 1940 there was a gradual awakening of interest in Latin America on the part of the United States. This is evidenced partly in the Inter-American program of the Hoover and Roosevelt administrations. Growing out of this general atmosphere was the interest on the part of an increasing number of American educators in American-sponsored schools in Latin America, many of which had existed for a number of years. However, no substantial coordinated action to help these schools resulted until 1942, when, as a result of a survey made by the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, the American Council on Education was requested to devise a program for strengthening independent American-sponsored schools in the other American republics.

This survey revealed the great influence that European-sponsored schools had exerted in that area, and emphasized the similar opportunities offered to the United States in fostering mutual good will and understanding between this country and its twenty sister republics. The Council therefore recommended the creation of a formal organization to further this worthy purpose, and



*Baseball at 8600 feet above  
sea level: American School,  
"Nueva Granada," Bogotá,  
Colombia*



the present Inter-American Schools Service was set up, the Council assuming responsibility, at the request of the Coordinator, for the operation of the program on a contractual basis. In 1943 official sponsorship was transferred from the Coordinator's Office to the Department of State, which has continued the arrangement with the Council every year since.

During the first operational fiscal year, 1943-44, the Council received \$220,000 to cover the expenses of the program, and the amount allocated by the United States government has varied since then from over \$200,000 to the present sum of \$128,250 per annum.

From its beginning the Service has functioned under the general supervision of an advisory committee of educators, appointed by the Council, with the cooperation of the Department of State and the United States Embassies in the twenty Latin American republics.

Dr. Roy Tasco Davis served as director of the Inter-American Schools Service from its origin until September 1953, when he resigned to assume his duties as United States Ambassador to Haiti. He was succeeded by the present director, Dr. William E. Dunn.

## **SIGNIFICANCE AND EXTENT OF OPERATIONS**

The total enrollment in the schools operating under the Inter-American Schools program has shown an annual increase to approximately 70,000 students currently in attendance. Most of the schools find it necessary to maintain a waiting list of students desiring to enroll. The annual cost of operation of the schools has varied from \$6,000,000 to \$7,000,000, while the contributions in grants and services rendered to them through the Service have ranged from \$220,000 to the present \$128,250. The value of property owned by the schools served is estimated at \$18,000,000. Over a period of years more than one million Latin American students have attended these schools.

In addition to functioning as models for United States educational methods, American

schools in Latin America provide desirable educational opportunities not otherwise available locally. The bilingual aspect of the schools' programs is particularly valuable, meeting a unique, practical, threefold need. First, it permits the Latin American to remain in his own country and acquire a knowledge and use of the English language and United States customs as preparation for college entrance in the United States. Second, it allows the North American student temporarily residing in Latin America to continue with an educational program comparable to one he or she might follow at home. Third, it meets the needs of those who, terminating their formal education at the secondary level, wish to prepare for bilingual positions of a clerical and junior administrative nature.

But perhaps the greatest fruits of the operation of American schools in Latin America are in terms of mutual understanding and tolerance among nations of the Western Hemisphere. Attending these schools are future leaders of Latin America, who will some day assume positions of prominence in Inter-American trade, industry, and cultural relations. The picture of these Latin American youth getting a day-by-day understanding of the principles and values we in the United States hold dear, from teachers working primarily from a sense of dedication to ideals, is a heartening one. In no better way can these students gain a working knowledge of the English language and North American customs and at the same time acquire an appreciation for the democratic way of life as practiced in the United States. The same holds true regarding tolerance and appreciation by North American students for the culture and languages of Latin America.

American schools in Latin America provide a foundation for the building of international relations between the United States and the other American republics which cannot easily be destroyed. Not only the boys and girls participating in play and class activities with children of other nationalities but also the adults participating as members of parent-teacher organizations, or as shareholders in a bilingual and binational enterprise, develop a better understanding of and regard for other nationalities. It is hoped

that the Inter-American schools program, which is encouraged and assisted by the Inter-American Schools Service, is recognized as the valuable aid it is to the growth of understanding between peoples of the Americas.

While the schools served by the Inter-American Schools Service have made encouraging progress during the past decade, they are still handicapped by lack of funds and adequate teaching personnel. The official aid granted to them through the Service has averaged less than 2 percent of their total budgets, but it has had an influence beyond the actual monetary sums involved, stimulating the schools to greater service.

## **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND BASIC POLICIES**

Since its inception, the Inter-American Schools Service has been guided by a philosophy—mutually agreed to by representatives of the American-sponsored schools, the United States Department of State, and American educational leadership—which maintains that the Service is a voluntary, nongovernmental agency of coordination and cooperation for American schools in Latin America having related interests. The Service makes available to eligible schools technical and professional advice and assistance without attempting to determine their policies. It also offers modest grants-in-aid to certain community-type schools which are most in need of financial assistance.

American-sponsored schools in Latin America have been established to supplement, rather than compete with, the work and activities of national school systems. They are binational in character, admitting both North American and national pupils of the respective countries. Nationals now constitute about 80 percent of the total enrollment. The Service endeavors to cooperate with the schools in their efforts to improve their educational programs to the benefit of the communities served, as they emphasize the philosophy and methods of schools in the United States. It assists the schools in obtaining accreditation with North American colleges and universities. The

purpose of the Service is to strengthen confidence in North American institutions generally and to promote mutual international understanding and respect. It is not its purpose to exercise any control over the educational policies of the schools.

The more than 200 American-sponsored schools in Latin America may be divided into four main categories: (1) independent, nonprofit, community schools; (2) religious or church-connected schools of various denominations; (3) schools maintained by large American companies operating in Latin America; and (4) privately owned schools operated for profit. The assistance of the Inter-American Schools Service is available to the first three categories, with the exception of the grants-in-aid. Only the independent, nonsectarian, community schools are eligible for this financial assistance. The Service believes that the participating schools of this type should be self-supporting to the greatest possible extent, and that they should be autonomous, cooperative institutions sponsored jointly by United States citizens and nationals residing in the local community.

## PRESENT ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

**Grants-in-Aid**—The Inter-American Schools Service administers grants-in-aid to eligible nonsectarian, nonprofit, community schools in Latin America, on the elementary and secondary levels, to assist them in employing trained administrators and teachers from the United States. Such grants have been made continuously to twenty-two schools and intermittently to three others, and have varied in amount from \$1,000 to about \$10,000 per annum each, in accordance with their emergency needs and within the limitations of the budget available to the Service.

**Teaching Personnel**—The Service assists these schools, and many others that do not receive grants-in-aid, in recruiting administrative officers and teachers; it constantly maintains a file of candidates whose credentials are carefully screened before they are employed. Approximately 500 teachers and administrators have been



selected since the Service has been in operation. No fees of any kind are charged.

**Latin American Students and Teachers**—Students from Latin America are given counsel and assistance in placement in colleges and universities in the United States. The Service furnishes information and advice to administrators and teachers desiring to study in the United States during leave of absence, and encourages the offering of special facilities to such persons by universities and study centers. It promotes the establishment of exchange teacherships among the institutions it serves and between them and appropriate systems and institutions in the United States. The granting of scholarships in the United States and the other American republics for deserving students from Latin America is encouraged, and information concerning these scholarships is disseminated. The Service also furnishes to families expecting to go to other American countries information about school facilities in the communities where they plan to reside.

**Professional Services**—Professional advice and assistance are available to more than 200 American-sponsored schools in Latin America. One of the most important functions of the Service is in aiding schools to obtain accreditation with universities and colleges in the United States. This accreditation is done by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, which has appointed a special committee to evaluate the work of the schools by actual inspection in the field. Thus far sixteen schools have been fully accredited. The Service endeavors to keep the schools abreast of recent educational practices and research in the United States. In addition to providing teaching materials, supplies, and reference books to the community schools, the Service distributes informational packets on various educational and professional subjects to schools that request them. It offers curriculum advice and assists schools in planning their academic and school activities programs.

**Information and Liaison**—The office of the Inter-American Schools Service acts as a general center of information for eligible schools, and as



*End of the school day:  
Monterrey, Mexico*

a liaison representative between them and public and private organizations and individuals in the United States, including governmental, educational, cultural, and commercial agencies.

**Financial Advice**—The Service assists in planning campaigns to raise funds locally for building purposes and equipment. Interested schools may also consult with it concerning their financial problems in general. Such schools have raised since the inception of the program approximately \$5,000,000 for building purposes, either through gifts or loans. Only four schools operated in buildings owned by their sponsors when the Service was established; there are now sixteen schools operating in community-owned buildings, and four additional schools are carrying on campaigns to raise building funds.

**Technical Advice**—The Service is prepared to give assistance in connection with plans for new buildings or additions to school plants by furnishing building plans and sources of further technical advice.

## ADMINISTRATIVE AND TEACHING POSITIONS

One of the most important functions of the Inter-American Schools Service is recruiting and screening candidates for administrative and teaching positions in American-sponsored schools in Latin America. While it serves principally the community schools in this respect, it also assists all other types of schools except private schools operated for profit.

Most of the schools pay salaries lower than those paid in the United States for comparable work, but there are many compensatory advantages to offset this factor. Indeed, the Service believes that the desire to teach abroad should not be based chiefly upon financial considerations, but rather upon the opportunity teaching offers ambitious educators to develop professionally by learning a foreign language well and by studying the habits and cultures of other people, and upon the opportunity teaching offers for rendering challenging and constructive service.





*American School (Escuela Americana), San Salvador, El Salvador: children boarding a school bus*



*Fostering Inter-American amity at the grass roots level: mingling of the flags, commencement exercises at the American School, Oruro, Bolivia*



In screening candidates, the Service keeps in mind the following areas of qualifications: training, experience, emotional stability, health, seriousness of purpose, adaptability, loyalty, moral character, and financial status. There are no restrictions as to religion, race, or color.

The contractual arrangements are between the individual administrators and teachers and the schools that employ them. Neither the Inter-American Schools Service nor the United States government assumes any responsibility with respect to these contracts. However, in no instance has any school failed to live up to its agreements and obligations.

The Service makes available to prospective teachers and administrators information, advice, and assistance concerning transportation facilities, travel documents, passports, visas, and health regulations.

## **REGULATIONS GOVERNING GRANTS-IN-AID**

Following are some of the regulations governing the granting of funds to the American schools in Latin America:

1. Only those schools that are open to nationals of the country in which they are located may receive grants.

2. Each grant must be approved by the United States Embassy in the country concerned.

3. Grants are forwarded to the schools through the United States Embassies in their respective countries. In cases where funds are deposited to schools' accounts in the United States, notifications of such deposits are forwarded to the schools through the appropriate American Embassy.

4. Upon receipt of a grant, a school is informed that the funds are to be used in assisting the school to pay salaries of staff members who are United States citizens.

5. All grants are subject to the approval of the Subcommittee on Financial Aid to Schools in Latin America.

6. A representative of the United States De-

partment of State is invited to attend all meetings of the subcommittee at which grants are considered.

7. Grants are not made to church-connected, company, or private schools.

8. Each school receiving a grant must have a charter or permit from the authorities in the country in which it is located.

9. Schools receiving grants must be incorporated in such manner as will prevent use of funds by unauthorized individuals or organizations.

10. Each school receiving a grant must have a United States citizen as director, except in emergencies.

11. If a school's buildings are used for religious instruction, that instruction must be offered outside regular school hours, and the buildings must be made available to all denominations.

12. The board of directors of each school should include some United States citizens.

13. The director or board of directors of each school must file with the appropriate American Embassy and the United States Department of State three reports each year, covering financial operation, program, and activities of the school.

## CONTRIBUTIONS

The Service obtained a ruling from the United States Bureau of Internal Revenue to the effect that contributions made to the American Council on Education from individuals and corporations for the American school program in Latin America may be deducted for purpose of income tax. These contributions cannot be designated for any particular school, but the country in which they are to be used can be named.

NOTE: A list of American-sponsored schools in Latin America with which the Inter-American Schools Service has maintained varying degrees of contact is available upon request, 10 cents postpaid. Inter-American Schools Service, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington 6, D.C.

## AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION

The American Council on Education, which sponsors the Inter-American Schools Service, is a voluntary nongovernmental council of national, regional, and local educational institutions and associations in the United States. Since its establishment in 1918 it has been a center of cooperation and coordination for the improvement of education at all levels, with particular emphasis on higher education. Outstanding leaders in education and public life serve on Council committees and participate in conferences and studies. The membership at the beginning of 1954 was 1,097, consisting of 143 national and regional associations, and 954 educational institutions.

During the periods of the First and Second World Wars, the Council performed many special services at the request of the President of the United States and various governmental agencies. In peacetime it has broadened and intensified its study of American education, expanded its services to its member institutions and to educational institutions in general, and initiated and supported projects designed to promote better international understanding and relations.





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